

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0798

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NS

SUBJ: BREAKUP OF THE NPK COALITION

SUMMARY: THE NPS PARTY OF PRIME MINISTER ARRON HAS MANOEUVERED THE PARTY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BRUMA (PNR) OUT OF THE GOVERNING COMBINATION (NPK) AND THUS OUT OF THE COMBINED LIST FOR THE COMING ELECTIONS. THE PNR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (5) HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THE GOVERNMENT FRACTION AND FORMED THEIR OWN PNR FRACTION, BUT WITHOUT ANY STATEMENT AS TO WHETHER THEY WILL REMAIN WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON VOTES OR WITH THE OPPOSITION. THERE IS AS YET NO INDICATION WHETHER THE THREE PNR MINISTERS IN THE CABINET WILL RESIGN OR BE THROWN OUT. THE OVERALL SITUATION IS THAT ARRON HAS "PURIFIED" THE NPK OF THE ECONOMICALLY-INEPT BRUMA AND THE LEFT-LEANING PNR, PAVED THE WAY FOR ENTRY INTO THE COMBINATION OF HINDUSTANI GEORGE HINDORIE, PROBABLY WITH HIS PARTY THE HPP, AND HAS CALLED FOR CONTINUATION OF THE KPTI (INDONESIANS) AND PSV (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS) IN THE COMBINATION. THE HINDUSTANI OPPOSITION PARTY HVP IS SO FAR SILENT. THIS SUMMARY IS ALL ANYONE
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INTERESTED IN SURINAM NEED READ, THE REMAINDER BEING INTENDED ONLY FOR THOSE FEW ANALYSIS TUCKED AWAY IN THE VARIOUS AGENCIES WHO NEED THE DETAILS.

1. THERE HAS BEEN A FEELING FOR THE PAST YEAR IN SURINAM POLITICS THAT ARRON WOULD LIKE TO FIND A WAY TO DROP BRUMA. BRUMA'S PERFORMANCE AS ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER HAS BEEN

DISASTROUS, HIS CLOSE-COLLABORATOR CYRIEL KARG WAS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN JAIL LAST WEEK FOR MISUSING GOVERNMENT MONEY, THE BRUMA-RUN MARIENBURG SUGAR PLANTATION, THE LAST ONE LEFT IN SURINAM, IS IN ECONOMIC RUINS AND SUGAR IS HAVING TO BE IMPORTED FROM CUBA TO A COUNTRY WHICH ONCE MADE HOLLAND RICH FROM IT. ON THE OTHER HAND, BRUMA WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE AN ATTRACTION FOR NATIONALISTIC-MINDED CREOLE GROUPS AND LABOR UNIONS, AND IT WAS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD BRING THOSE EXTRA VOTES IN TO THE COMBINATION IN THE COMING ELECTIONS. IT APPEARS THAT ARRON (PUSHED BY VAN GENDEREN AND OTHERS IN THE NPS) FINALLY CONCLUDED THAT BRUMA AND THE PNR WOULD REDUCE, RATHER THAN ENHANCE, THE ALREADY SHAKY CHANCES OF THE COMBINATION OF WINNING THE ELECTIONS, AND HE DECIDED TO GET RID OF THE PNR.

2. THE MECHANISM USED WAS A FIGHT OVER THE NUMBER OF SAFE SEATS TO BE GIVEN THE PNR IN THE COMBINED ELECTION LIST OF THE COMBINATION. BRUMA HELD QOT FOR FIVE, THE CURRENT NUMBER IN PARLIAMENT. THE NPS SAID THE RIGHT NUMBER SHOULD BE THREE BUT EVEN ONE OF THOSE SHOULD BE GIVEN UP TO BRING THE PNR INTO LINE WITH THE KTPI AND THE PSV, AND TO ALLOW A PLACE FOR HINDORIE AND HIS HPP. THE PNR ANSWERED WITH A PUBLIC LETTER THAT THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE AND THE NPS RESPONDED AUG 17 WITH A FORMAL MOTION ADOPTED AT A CONVENTION TO TERMINATE COOPERATION WITH THE PNR IN CONNECTION WITH

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THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS. ON AUG 18 THE FIVE PNR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FORMALLY NOTIFIED THE CHAIRMAN THAT THEY HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE NPK FRACTION AND HAD ESTABLISHED A FRACTION OF THEIR OWN. THEY CAREFULLY DID NOT STATE, HOWEVER, WHETHER THEY WOULD REMAIN ON THE GOVERNMENT BENCHES OR MOVE TO THE OPPOSITION. WITH ALL PARLIAMENT BUSINESS OF ANY IMPORTANCE ALREADY OUT OF THE WAY FOR THE ELECTIONS, THIS WOULD MAKE LITTLE IF ANY PRACTICAL DIFFERENCE, EXCEPT THAT, IF THE PNR HAD FORMALLY GONE INTO THE OPPOSITION, THE THREE PNR MINISTERS, BRUMA, HOOST AND FRIJMERSUM, WOULD HAVE HAD TO RESIGN. AS IT IS, THEY APPARENTLY REMAIN IN THE CARETAKER GOVERNMENT UNLESS ARRON THROWS THEM OUT.

3. IN ANNOUNCING THE WITHDRAWAL OF ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PNR FOR THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE NPS EXPRESSED THE INTENTION OF MAINTAINING THE COALITION WITH THE KTPI AND PSV AND OF LOOKING FOR OTHER PARTNERS. CERTAINLY HIDORIE AND THE HPP WAS THE PRIMARY MEANING OF THE LAST PHRASE, BUT THE KPS WILL ALSO BE TRYING TO ATTRACT OTHERS WHO WOULD HAVE COME WITH IT IN THE PAST BUT FOR THEIR DISLIKE AND FEAR OF BRUMA AND THE PNR. MOREOVER, HOOST AND FRIJMERSUM ARE AMONG THE MOST

CAPABLE MINISTERS IN THE CABINET, IN THE EMBASSY VIEW,
AND IT WILL REMAIN TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEY WILL GO DOWN WITH
BRUMA ON A SINKING SHIP OR SHIFT LOYALTIES TO ARRON.

4. NOT A WORD HAS YET BEEN HEARD PUBLICLY
FROM THE OPPOSITION OR ITS LEADER, LACHMON. CLEARLY THEY
ARE ENJOYING THE SPECTACLE OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE ARRON-
BRUMA RELATIONSHIP AND CAN SEE NOTHING IN IT FOR THEM BUT GOOD.
NONETHELESS, IT MAY WELL BE TRUE THAT THE ABSENCE OF BRUMA WILL
BRING MORE VOTES TO THE NPK THAN IT WOULD HAVE GOTTEN WITH
HIM, AND THE SITUATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY PRESAGE AN
ARRON DEFEAT.

5. AS AN ADDITIONAL NOTE, THE TRIAL OF EX-MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
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SOEMITA, LEADER OF THE KTPI AND STILL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,
FINALLY GOT UNDER WAY AUG 18 IN THE MIDST OF THE CRISIS.
SOEMITA'S LAWYERS HAVE DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DELAY THE
TRIAL, APPARENTLY IN THE HOPE OF PRESERVING THIS TECHNICAL
INNOCENCE UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION LISTS ARE MADE UP OR
EVEN UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS, TO FACE ARRON WITH THE
CHOICE OF INCLUDING A MAN HIGH UP ON THE COMBINATION
LIST WHO WILL DOUBTLESS BE CONVICTED OF HIGH CRIMES,
OR DROPPING HIM FROM THE LIST AT THE RISK OF PREJUDGING
THE JUDICIAL PROCESS AND OFFENDING THE 15 PERCENTINDONESIAN
POPULATION. IT NOW LOOKS AS IF THE TRIAL WILL BE
COMPLETED AND SOEMITA SENTENCED BEFORE THE LISTS ARE MADE UP,
IN WHICH CASE HE WILL BE EXCLUDED AS A CONVICTED FELON AND
ARRON WILL ESCAPE, TO SOME EXTENT, HIS PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECISION.

6. ANYONE WHO WOULD BET NOW ON WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN
ON ELECTION DAY AND BETWEEN NOW AND THEN IN SURINAM
POLITICS WOULD BE A GREATER GAMBLER THAN THIS EMBASSY
INTENDS TO BE.
ZURHELLEN

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